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Metaphor Studies in the English Language

Introduction

Richard Trim and Diana Lewis



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Introduction

Richard Trim and Diana Lewis

- 1 One consequence of the widening interest in metaphor studies over the past three decades has been closer integration of studies of figurative language with cognitive-linguistic research into language in general. In this issue of *Lexis* devoted to the study of metaphor, the different contributions largely reflect this trend and emphasize its importance to improving our understanding of metaphorization. In particular, the cognitive linguistic implications of Lakoff & Johnson's *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (CMT) are taken up in many of the articles in this issue. The interesting point that emerges from the arguments developed is that, although CMT represents a very useful tool in metaphor analysis, the theoretical framework would appear to require ongoing modification and adaptation. One point that emerges in several of the articles is that the traditional CMT view, which regards mappings to be based primarily or solely on extra-linguistic conceptualization, also needs to take linguistic structures into consideration. This may particularly be the case of phonetic and morpho-syntactic features of lexicalization. In addition to various cognitive models, other theoretical approaches to metaphor are also represented in this issue, including those from the structuralist, transformational and pragmatics schools of thought. Corpus-based research, as well as different linguistic components, are also discussed in this selection of studies.
- 2 The issue has been ordered into three main groups: first, lexicalization in the major semantic fields of medicine, politics, economics, intellectual property and law; second, the role of morphology and grammaticalization in the metaphorization process and, third, more specific processes and fields such as the "magnifying-glass effect" in slang and collocational variation in conceptualization between the real-world and fantasy.
- 3 The first article, "La métaphore, outil conceptuel et didactique en anglais médical", by **Marie-Lise Assier**, highlights some of the potential practical applications of metaphor studies in the medical field. In a contrastive study of lexicalization in conceptual metaphor between Western and Oriental medical practices, she suggests that the latter have a more therapeutic value in the way their metaphors are construed. Traditional Chinese medicine, for example, symbolizes illness as an imbalance in Chinese

conceptual metaphors rather than an aggressive invasion of the body, as found in many Western constructs. This is followed by another study of lexicalization in an analysis of political metaphor by **Anne Delouis** in her paper, “When history becomes a metaphor for the present and the future: recent far-right discourse about immigration in the UK”. Adopting a similar approach to Assier’s study within a CMT framework, she suggests that the types of conceptual metaphors used in right-wing discourse are often in the form of hyperboles, such as immigration being mapped onto concepts related to ethnic cleansing, colonization and conquest. Various aspects of historical origins are discussed in connection with the creation and application of modern-day metaphors in far-right discourse with respect to their appeal to the emotions. This is particularly effective when people are able to remember relevant historical events.

- 4 The lexicalization of metaphors in the field of politics is again discussed in the contribution, “Power and Metaphor: Towards more Executive Power in American Presidents’ Inaugural Addresses?” by **Rémi Digonnet**. In his investigation of conceptual metaphor in American presidents’ inaugural addresses, the author comes to the conclusion that notwithstanding the large range of mappings used, such as weather, water, fire, vegetal concepts, animals, war, construction or lexicalized prefixes like *-un* signifying difficulty, (as in *an unclimbed ridge*), the underlying theme of the vast majority of the metaphors is power. The question which then arises is the extent to which the notion of power may reflect the increasing executive powers conferred on the president at a national level and its consequences internationally. A final analysis of political metaphor, this time combined with the economy, can be seen in **Cathy Parc**’s contribution: “Reflets d’actualité/s : la métaphore politique et économique à l’interface du contexte international”. The corpus under study reveals the way the media juxtapose the economy and current events, as in the case of the Olympic Games. The obvious parallel between competitiveness in the world of the economy and competitiveness in sport provides an excellent mapping equation by which to attract readers’ attention. Illustrations, for example, of an athlete running down a race-track with an American flag on his back logically leads to metaphoric questions such as: Is the US economy on the right track to recovery? The author goes on to show how the juxtaposition of linguistic and conceptual metaphors in very temporary current affairs, whether they are combined in textual and visual form or otherwise, creates a kaleidoscope of representations of world economies.
- 5 The domain of intellectual property is the focus of the study, “Conceptions of Copyright in a Digital Context: A Comparison between French and American File-sharers” by **Stefan Larsson**. Despite the fact that conceptual metaphors often involve terms such as theft, trespassing and piracy in copyright infringement and that file-sharers generally conceptualize their dealings in terms of sharing rather than of property rights, the comparable-corpus approach highlights the types of differences that can be found between the two cultures. One suggestion in the results is that Americans tend to view file-sharing in utilitarian terms which are based on concepts such as market, government and industry. On the other hand, French file-sharers often think of the copyright issues that directly affect the artists involved. The legal aspects of copyright are also raised in the article, “Metaphors in English for Law: Let Us Keep Them!” by **Isabelle Richard**, who emphasizes the fact that certain metaphors used in copyright discourse can be manipulative and misleading in a legal context. The voice on a film, for example, which states that the downloading of a pirated film represents an act of stealing, is a distortion of legal reality. In this case, no legal statement is actually being

made. By using a background that portrays the cultural history of legal metaphor, however, she defends the use of metaphor in legal terminology and claims that the choice of images in lexicalized terms can be very useful, particularly in remembering the different types of processes involved in legal cases.

- 6 Following this main group of articles on the lexicalization process within a general CMT framework come two articles which represent a different form of analysis: they focus specifically on morphology. The study entitled “*Métaphore grammaticale : le nom en -ness, une création lexicale à usage unique*” by **Julie Neveux** adopts a more critical approach to CMT. The author claims that metaphoric mapping does not solely involve thought processes, as often proposed in CMT, but linguistic structures as well. The argument is that linguistic influence becomes apparent in suffixation such as “-ness” in English. A comparison with other potential equivalents in affixation, as in the case of “-ity”, would suggest that the choice of “-ness” in the history of English is due to factors such as phonetics and value-stressing, (to emphasize the core meaning of the lexicalized item), and thus depends on language structures. Another aspect of metaphorization in morphology is the article by **Romain Vanhoudheusden**: “*La création lexicale d’origine métaphorique dans le discours journalistique sportif. De la productivité de la structure verbale anglaise Vb+out/off/away et des problèmes de traduction en français*”. This contrastive study, based on a French/English parallel corpus of sports reporting, is relevant to both metaphor studies and translation studies. The comparison of English and French highlights the fact that the two languages often use different internalizing and externalizing processes in the construction of morphology and phrasal verbs. This would tend to support the case put forward in the previous article on suffixation that inherent linguistic structures play a part in the metaphorization process. Effects of hyperbolization in sports commentary play on these different structures and thereby require various translation strategies.
- 7 The final group of metaphor studies in this volume ends up with an investigation by **Fabrice Antoine** of a very different phenomenon: the “magnifying-glass effect”. Antoine’s article, “*Argot, métaphore et ‘effet de loupe’*”, explores the field of slang and suggests that linguistic structures play their part in lexicalization. His main thesis with regard to the “magnifying-glass effect” is that in the case of slang, metaphorization is based on the principle of the least amount of effort. In this respect, truncation and simplification of phonetic and syntactic structures ease metaphor creation. With the aid of a large number of examples, the author demonstrates the spontaneous nature of slang creation.
- 8 The present volume makes a considerable contribution to our understanding of metaphor and raises new and interesting issues regarding its creation. By presenting a large range of corpora and different linguistic features, the arguments presented here propose further debates on metaphorization and thereby pave the way for exciting new avenues of research.

AUTHORS

RICHARD TRIM

Aix-Marseille Université, Aix-en-Provence, France

DIANA LEWIS

Aix-Marseille Université, Aix-en-Provence, France